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THE

HUNTERIAN ORATION,

DELIVERED BEFORE

The Royal College of Surgeons,

IN LONDON,

ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21.

1820.

BY ANTHONY CARLISLE, F.R.S., F.S.A., F.L.S.,

SURGEON EXTRAORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY, AND TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER;
PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY TO THE ROYAL ACADEMY, AND
SURGEON TO THE WESTMINSTER HOSPITAL.

DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION,

TO THE KING.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1820.

WELLCOME
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Printed by A. and R. Spottiswoode,
Printers-Street, London.

TO

His Most Excellent Majesty

KING GEORGE THE FOURTH.

SIR,

THE advancement of Science and the diffusion of Learning have often been promoted and exalted by the fostering support of powerful Patrons or Illustrious Monarchs; and the Cultivators of similar pursuits in the present generation rely with augmented assurance on the extension

of the same enlightened, discriminating, and benevolent Patronage.

Under the impression of such Sentiments, I most humbly entreat YOUR MAJESTY to condescend to sanction with regal protection a work whose strongest claim to such distinguished Favour is that of being dedicated to the service of Humanity.

YOUR MAJESTY'S
most dutiful and most devoted
Servant and Subject,
ANTHONY CARLISLE.

THE

HUNTERIAN ORATION.

HONOURED MASTER,

THE Founders of a yearly Commemoration of the merits and studies of MR. JOHN HUNTER, have given ample scope for topics, by the terms and conditions that are set forth in the Deed of Trust which establishes this Oration: it is, therefore, not so difficult to provide subjects, as it is to adapt them to the existing state of our Profession.

To keep alive the public-minded exertions of Mr. Hunter, to cherish and to encourage those abstract researches which give the Healing Art a claim to be associated with the Sciences, and thereby to fix it upon surer elements, are worthy occasions for assembling our Brotherhood.

It is the chief glory of this College to hold a charge delegated to them by the Legislature, for keeping, using, and extending Mr. Hunter's Collection; and all its Members ought to feel a pride in contributing to the augmentation or the utility of a National Establishment, designed to contain the best evidences for a system of Medical Philosophy.

The generous institution of this Discourse

bids fair to mark with honourable notice the cultivators of those branches of knowledge which tend to elucidate Physiology and Pathology ; — a distinction more required, because the generality of mankind are incompetent to appreciate such labours.

Persons, successively appointed to this office, will be induced to deliver their sentiments variously, since the occasion must draw forth unprecedented observations, elicit new critical inquiries, and extend our range into scientific theories and demonstrations.

The acquisition and the management of this public Collection form an epoch in the history of our College ; they have opened a permanent receptacle for the security

and use of Anatomical Natural History, embracing the whole organized Creation; the ultimate consequence and applications of which are at present incalculable. The dawn of this Establishment affords an opportunity for every person connected with the Healing Art, to enrol his name as a Benefactor to Mankind; it invites every Member of our Fraternity to send his oblation of anatomical skill, or to fill up a vacancy in some series which may eventually render the knowledge of general Anatomy more adequate to the explanation of living phenomena.

Any attempt to describe our natural treasures, or to measure the beneficial purposes of our Museum in the space of this limited hour, would be vain and fruitless;

those duties are, however, comprised within the conditions of a Grant, which orders numerous Lectures to be delivered annually for the demonstration of facts connected with the Medical Profession.

The Rulers of this Institution must be aware, that a Discourse expressly endowed to perpetuate the justly deserved fame of Mr. Hunter, would be injuriously restricted if wholly confined to his individual desert; and that the magnificent works of his hand would soon cease to possess interest, if a fatal apathy should stop the growth of the Collection, or a prejudiced affection interdict improved methods for employing it's materials. We should also bear in mind the perishable substances committed to our care: for, unless they be

timely recorded in books, some of the rare articles peculiarly selected by the Founder will be obscured or lost.

By frequent expositions of MR. HUNTER's plan, our contemporaries and successors will be enabled to judge his arrangements, and they will be induced to complete the defective parts or to supply new illustrations; but it is desirable that all future additions should come under Zoological systems of Nomenclature, so that each object may be henceforward correctly designated. While numberless incidents of organic nature remain unexplored, (and many of our physiological reasonings are not consistent with the exactness of physical science,) we must continue to solicit even the detached illustrations of general anatomy. As our accu-

mulations advance, the isolated facts will demand assortment and a critical estimate of their respective services; but such decisions ought only to be intrusted to men of unquestionable knowledge and of superior learning: — Should we, however, quit the chaster paths of humble observation, and, led by rash impetuosity, enter the desert of Metaphysics in quest of ultra-physical knowledge, we shall assuredly waste our strength, and become the scorn of better informed men.

The constitution of organized bodies is yet imperfectly understood; but, if we patiently wait until the inward history of living creatures is more extensively shown, and until Chymistry has developed the essentials of their composition, we or our

followers must be rewarded by more satisfactory views.

Up to the present period, I am not apprized of any synthetical experiment which has yielded a clear explanation of the peculiar products of organic bodies, except in the single instance of the mode of converting Starch into Sugar.

With the improvements and the extension of human intelligence, with advances in allied sciences, and a judicious union of them with our practical experience, the utility and value of our philosophical pursuits must continue to rise;—whilst the powerful helps of collateral Arts, and the grand possessions of this Institution, afford such unparalleled advantages, that we should fail in discharging the public obli-

gations imposed on us, if we were to permit Surgery to linger behind the other Learned Professions.

More complete researches into the construction of all the kinds of animals, and more exact inquiries as to their component materials, will unquestionably supply better elements for medical reasoning. From the days of ARISTOTLE down to this time, natural philosophers have remarked the semblance among animal fabricks, and have discerned the connection between certain structures and their allotted functions. That transcendent Greek discovered the progressive stages of animal generation through the daily inspection of an incubated egg, and he traced the evolution of the young bird, from it's first appearance as an unmodelled

speck upon the yolk, up to it's final equipment; nor has the subsequent skill of mankind devised any better course of illustration.

It may be the destiny of this College to execute the glorious scheme of ARISTOTLE; to draw together the creatures of the earth, to unravel their natures, and to display with perspicuity their several applications for the services of all sensitive beings.

In the early part of our professional lives, there usually is, or ought always to be, leisure for the prosecution of those studies,—since unexperienced men are not qualified to act as Medical Counsellors or Judges in cases of life and death; their proper occupation lies in the less responsible and auxiliary ministrations of our calling,—while

an industrious attention during youth to the scientific rudiments of our Art, bespeaks a substantial reputation, which only waits the sanction of experience to deserve the public favour. I need not contrast this line of proceeding with that of the arrogant pretenders to medical eminence, or the hasty and greedy seekers of premature fame or fortune, who can neither claim the sagacity of age, nor show the proofs of superior knowledge.

They who aspire to the higher stations in the Healing Art, may find ample scope for genuine distinction in the Medical Hospitals now established in almost every district of this great kingdom. These inestimable schools afford endless instruction to their medical officers, and incalculable

benefit to the young student. They have become equally beneficial to the rich subscribers and to the indigent sufferers, by raising skilful Surgeons and Physicians in every province: A striking instance of which I am called upon to mention, in announcing the loss of our celebrated Brother Mr. William Hey. This gentleman had been Surgeon to the Leeds Infirmary upwards of forty-five years; during that time he earned the respect and possessed the full confidence of a populous neighbourhood, extending more than fifty miles round his abode.

Many of the valuable results of his experience and skill are already recorded, but as the history of his well-spent life will soon be published, that undertaking super-

sedes any attempt on my part to do justice to his memory.

The different orders of society must ever require gradations among the practitioners of our Faculty, and the inhabitants of large towns will be continually induced to select from men of the highest repute, some, as Referees, who may be consulted in cases of extreme danger or of ambiguity.

With a moderate share of scholastic learning, an accurate knowledge of the details of human anatomy, and a manly spirit of enterprise, every young Surgeon is competent to become an improver of his Art, and a contributor to our Collection; nor will such tribute be given in vain, since the College freely exposes all it's specimens, and gratefully mentions every donor.

It would be foreign to my present purpose (although conformable to the spirit of this endowment), if I were to produce a copious list of the desiderata in Comparative Anatomy, which are wanted to unite our series of organic illustrations respecting the functions of Animal Structures; but happily the extension of those researches, and of faithful narratives belonging to them, which we see so repeatedly promulgated, are sure to advance Physiology, whether they be instigated by scientific direction, or by less enlightened motives; whether transmitted in a classified series, or obtruded as vulgar wonders. That it is better to collect natural evidence according to some adopted system, than to gather it in a desultory way, must be

granted; but we are not authorized to slight humble offerings, until we are able to diffuse more of public spirit among our Brethren, and to inspire our rising successors with a generous enthusiasm for these inquiries.

Every attempt to wield the multitudinous facts, and the varied occurrences of Nature, and to convert such truths to practical use in the Healing Art, requires technical Nomenclature and Classification. This difficult task has fallen upon men who possess natural knowledge and scientific precision, united with learning; but we have to regret, that a permanent and generally adopted method is not yet attained; for, until that great preliminary is settled, the records of naturalists, and

experimental observers, cannot be indexed as even a part of the rational catalogue of the Creation. From the want of zoological order, and of proper appellations, many articles in the Collection of our College are at present unknown, or imperfectly surmised, — a lamentable defect, which should warn all future Comparative Anatomists to provide themselves with the current and most generally approved language of scientific Naturalists, and urge them to be critically exact in marking the names and synonyms of resembling species; for without such definite accuracy the enlargement of our Museum will lead to inextricable confusion, and terminate in a mass of disorderly curiosities, — objects wholly unprofitable in the Art of Surgery.

To avoid the cheerless toil of continual assortment, and to extend our works to future ages, we are therefore called upon, as the Keepers of a public Treasure, to maintain and dispose of our natural riches under all the best advantages of Physical Science,—while in every act we are bound to observe that we are not engaged about trifles, but in the sacred duty of improving a perilous Art, which, under the ordeal of this College, has charge over the healths and lives of our fellow Beings.

An intimate acquaintance with the common-place facts of human Anatomy is required from every Candidate who asks a license to practise Surgery or Medicine, but the mere topography of the human

frame shows little of the rationale of it's functions or of it's diseases.

We must look through the medium of general Nature to catch even a glimpse of her laws; and although the magnanimous exertions of Mr. Hunter, and his successful intrepidity, far exceed ordinary powers, yet his great example is worthy to be distantly followed by those who solicit any degree of public regard.

The causes which rule the complex phenomena of living bodies are not apparent in any single species of creature; but the interesting diversity of textures and compositions dispersed through the animal race, are so many connecting links, that they almost seem designed to tempt the curiosity of man, and to lead his

rational faculties into those scientific considerations which must eventually render our Art both more profound and more efficacious.

In some Animals, the parts ordained to perform definite offices, are simple, distinct, and seemingly homogeneous; in others, they occur intermixed with adventitious, auxiliary, or subordinate structures; so that nothing short of a copious and particular knowledge of these facts can warrant any physiological theory. The whole of these contemplations invariably lead to conclusive proofs of the strict adaptation between animal structures and their functions;—and while the wisdom of this moral governance, and the supreme order of Providence, command our adoration, we

may be permitted to advance our researches and cogitations respecting those natural events, which comprehend the most important information for the improvement of Surgery.

If a scrutiny into the workings of animate bodies should need the sanction of high authority, we may find it in the character and writings of our immortal countryman, Dr. William Harvey.—Under a dignified simplicity, Dr. Harvey concealed a most profound and philosophical mind; and his penetrating genius set no scanty bounds to it's possible attainments. In early life he gave himself the task to ascertain the circulation of the Blood, and by means of comparative Anatomy, he so completely executed his design, that no-

thing remained to be proved after he published that grand discovery.

As a man he was distinguished for piety, for dutiful attachment to his Sovereign, for patriotism, and for unimpeachable morals; —as a Comparative Anatomist and Physiologist, I am unable to find his equal;—but modesty and meekness seem to have disqualified him for the contentions of the world.

We are indebted to the generous activity of Sir GEORGE ENT, one of the most learned Physicians who has graced the office of President in the London College, and the leading Medical Character of his age, for the publication of DR. HARVEY's incomparable specimen of Anatomical Natural History, intituled "Exercitations

" concerning the Generation of Living " Creatures."—But our gratitude for this obligation is mingled with feelings of horror, when we read of a band of superstitious ruffians (the revolutionary fanatics of that age) breaking into DR. HARVEY's retirement, and plundering him of a completed Manuscript History of the Generation of Insects;—a work which the Author esteemed above all his others, and not one fragment whereof was spared by those atrocious destroyers.

It is to be apprehended that some of our Brethren may be desirous of exerting themselves to extend the knowledge of general or comparative Anatomy, but are deterred by false notions respecting it's difficulties. The plain, yet strict rules, for

acquiring such information, as they are laid down by ARISTOTLE, and since made practically easy by Lord BACON, have unlocked the mysteries of Philosophy, and rendered every man a competent labourer, who is capable to make observations, and has ability to record them.

Sufficient skill may be obtained by any Student, during his courses of human dissection, to qualify him for anatomical investigations generally;—since, after exploring the most complicated frame, and the pattern guide for all other creatures, he may turn with vigour and facility to animals of a less perplexing structure.

DR. HARVEY, and MR. JOHN HUNTER, equally derived their enlarged skill from an introductory study of human Anatomy.

The former was however initiated under the celebrated FABRICIUS, and he had received a classical education;—but MR. HUNTER owed his rise to the force of natural genius.—Undismayed by the conscious want of erudition, and fearless of worldly difficulties, he incessantly directed his penetrating powers to find truths which might enlarge or establish his peculiar opinions respecting the laws of Vitality.

It is far from my present purpose to animadvert upon the metaphysics of MR. HUNTER, or to approach even the border of that illusory vortex which originated from the reveries of PLATO. Our duty as the Collectors of natural evidence is obvious; it consists in making an arrangement of similar facts, to exhibit a series

of corresponding proofs, in the order of cause and effect, taken from living bodies; but our works would be ill executed if we entertained only a partial view of these subjects, or if we suffered ourselves to be governed by the speculative doctrines of any Man.

Every analytical statement drawn from general Anatomy is valuable, because in the progress of inquiry it will be found allied to some other incidents, or become the pivot on which rational induction may turn; there is nevertheless a distinction between leading facts, and those of frivolous or doubtful profit, but the discrimination of all such difficult subjects belongs exclusively to Men of superior knowledge. —Unalterable decrees have determined

that the rate of human intelligence shall depend on the acuteness and extent of observation, and on the witnessing of facts by each individual.

The examination of natural properties and of their several circumstances, the lucid classification of them, and the conversion of such results to practical benefit in the Science of Medicine, constitute it's beauty and importance.

On the faithfulness and clearness of physical descriptions, on the number and pointedness of strong facts, on the just inferences to be deduced from them, and on a compendious facility of reference, will always rest the beneficial or vague effects of our Philosophical pursuits.

As any attempt to enlist a large pro-

portion of our Members under the banner of Mr. Hunter might seem hopeless, I may be excused for endeavouring to advise those who may perceive the intrinsic merit of his researches. Whoever addicts himself zealously to the study of Comparative Anatomy, will be certain to acquire increasing facility as he advances,—while the self-gratification of being able to judge the facts from his own impressions, will quicken the mind, and prepare it for estimating the representations of others.

The commonwealth of Scientific Literature being doomed to receive it's most valuable accessions from practical observers, the same descriptions of men are not only the best judges of all tributary reports, but they are the most qualified to

derive benefit from them. It is a gross error to suppose that any degree of book learning, or any extent of closet meditation, will produce an exact or circumstantial knowledge of Comparative Anatomy. The persons competent to measure the verity of recorded statements, and to value the evidences presented to view, are those who have been extensively occupied in practical inquiries, and whose minds have become charged with many inexpressible particulars which bid defiance to verbal description.

Lest, however, my younger Auditors should be discouraged by supposing that the inward natural history of animals is too deeply buried for the reach of ordinary capacities, I will, in addition to the ex-

ample of Mr. John Hunter, offer them the cheering enticement of Dr. Harvey, in his own beautiful words: — "Whoever," he observes, "entereth this new and un-
"frequented path, and inquires for truth in
"the vast volume of Nature by anatomical
"dissections and experiments, he meets
"with such a crowd of observations, and
"those in such exotic shapes, that to
"unfold to others the mysteries himself
"hath discovered, will be more toil than
"the finding them out, for many things
"occur which have yet no name; such is
"the plenty of things and the dearth of
"words."—"Nature truly is herself the
"most faithful interpreter of her own
"secrets; and what she exhibits either
"more briefly or more obscurely in one

" kind, the same she explains more largely
" and openly in another;"—for " no man
" doubtless hath ever rightly determined
" of the use or office of any part who hath
" not in many Animals beheld, and within
" himself diligently considered, the fabric,
" situation, annexed vessels, and other acci-
" dents thereof;"—for " Nature being
" herself divine and perfect, is always
" consonant to herself in the same things;
" and as her works do either agree or differ,
" (namely, in kind, species, or in some
" analogy), so her operation is the same or
" different" with the varying of the fabrick.

Although great additions have been made to the stock of anatomical facts since the time of Dr. Harvey, still much remains to be done; and I am willing to

believe that an appeal from the College to it's Members, for their co-operation, will not be submitted in vain. I may venture to announce that every contribution will be received with grateful acknowledgements, and that an honourable desire to appreciate every offering with liberality is the prevailing sentiment of this Court. Under such auspices the opportunities for present distinction, for future fame, and for the payment of a debt which we all owe to Society, are singularly favourable.

Medical Officers, sanctioned by our diploma, are spread over the whole Globe,—they are sufficiently numerous, and for the most part qualified to render us circumstantial information relative to the habits and anatomical mechanism of the more

rare and interesting objects of the Creation. Descriptions of their several modes of procreating, of their feeding and growth, and of their locomotive apparatus, are Zoological desiderata;—while the tracings of organic structure, through all their vicissitudes, whether they apply to muscular tissues, vascular adaptations, organs for digestion, for respiration, or for the cognizance of sensible impressions, are exclusively within our province.

The circumstances and the variations of organic Nature, evinced by differences in physical construction, are equally available to the Science of Physiology whether they resemble the parts of the human body or not. The particular texture, the bearings and relation of any part in the same

creature, are also worthy to be recorded, independently of any forced analogy; and such objects would become more estimable if transmitted in a well preserved state, accompanied by accurate drawings of the perishable appearances, and by Zoological narratives.

The human body has undergone a copious physical analysis,—but with this exception, and that of the horse, no animal has been subjected to the same degree of exact and particular examination,—while every species of living creature contains organic illustrations of easy access, and all of them more or less conducive to the improvement of Medical knowledge. Comparisons between the structures and component parts of Man and other Creatures

proceed but a short distance into the vast and diversified range of Animated Nature. Every distinct or peculiar property in even the most strange Animals deserves our attention, perhaps in preference to those which most nearly resemble ourselves, since it is from comparing the analogies, and again confronting them with their exceptions or contraries, that we must deduce just notions about the elaborations of life.

The Manual of general Anatomy and Zoology, lately published by Professor BLUMENBACH, and the systems of Monsieur CUVIER, are useful indexes in the present state of Zootomy; — but, when considered with reference to the vast extent of unexplored Nature, they contain little more

than specimens of the immense riches concealed among the apparel of organized Creatures.

When the knowledge of general Anatomy, and of the essential constituent materials of animated Beings, shall have advanced to that comprehensive limit which entitles them to be ranged with the exact Sciences, Medical Physiology may become equal to the assignment of vital causes and effects; but until that period, the disputations of learned logic have no such tendency. According to my humble estimation, we are not yet possessed of sufficiently numerous examples to warrant the assumption of those especial laws which regulate vital actions, — and, I apprehend, that we shall find it needful to detach the

purely mineral components of living bodies, and to consider separately the distinct influence of Physical Causes upon living functions, before we arrive at any higher degree of precision. That such investigations may be conducted without creating metaphysical subtleties seems clear enough, because we have only to measure, note, and deduct the respective powers of physical causes, and the remainders which are totally unassignable to those causes, must belong to Vitality.—In whatever order of succession or relationship, the blended phenomena of mechanical, chemical, and vital causes may appear in the living functions, they admit of being each safely examined without danger to the course of medical knowledge; indeed we cannot

indulge a hope of ever knowing more than the several forms and compounds by which living Nature effects her particular purposes.

First causes are in all instances placed beyond the sphere of our comprehension, and it is both vain and futile to attempt to penetrate the arcana of that Omniscience by whose fiat the Universe is ordered.

I do not presume to scan the laws of vitality, but solicit the further cultivation of natural knowledge, until the evidences of demonstrable facts and of legitimate inductions shall bring our Art nearer to the confines of a Science. By a patient and careful perseverance in Anatomical and Chymical researches extended to all the species of Animated Creatures, and by

faithfully noting the several physical causes which are united to organic or vital structures, we are sure to augment both the knowledge of the nature of Diseases and of the modus operandi of our remedies. The regular practitioners of the Healing Art should remind themselves, that all their ministrations are purely physical, and consequently it becomes them to understand the powers of such agents, and to consider the degrees of influence which they may exert upon bodies only partially obedient to the laws of common matter.

It is sufficiently known among ourselves, that both the Practitioners of Medicine and Surgery continue divided into two Sects of Empirics and Dogmatists;— the former assuming to possess no other knowledge

than that which has been derived from their own observations, or from the statements recorded by others. This is not a very flattering representation of our Faculty, since the rejection of reason and science by the Empiric leaves no other pretension but his experience; and the moral question, of the manner in which he wades into skill by practical experience drawn from his Patients, is too delicate for public discussion.

It may be apparent that the demands from the various conditions of persons in Society do not admit the whole of our Profession to become Philosophers; but I will venture to affirm, that no man is competent to estimate the evidence of even a human pulse, in order to inform himself of

the state of a disease, or to guide his judgement in prescribing remedies, unless he perfectly comprehends the circulation of the blood, and has been habituated to consider the different indications of a throbbing Artery; yet this slender rationale is a step above the sceptical Empiric, who entertains no belief beyond the reports of his Senses.

In celebrating Mr. John Hunter's birth, I feel it my duty to set forth his manifold claims upon our homage, and, above all his other virtues, to fix upon his Noble spirit and his Public generosity, as the attributes which best deserve our Praise. To his dignified public conduct and public character we owe unceasing Respect, — while his rare Genius graces our College with

the proud distinction of owning a prodigy in natural intellect. Reared and cherished in this Metropolis, the genial warmth of it's public-minded Inhabitants expanded all his energies, and their liberal discrimination supported him through those difficult, laborious, and expensive researches, which were consecrated to the advancement of Medical Science. Although my poverty in language forbids the hope of doing justice to Mr. Hunter as a public Man, yet his merits as an observer, and as an interpreter of Nature will descend through every age, and be esteemed by every Nation, while Knowledge and Science continue to be cultivated. To a masculine constitution of body he united an athletic mind; and the vigour of both was aided by acute and

faithful Organs; his daring Spirit was not weakened by over-refined sensibility, nor his bold and often original conjectures impeded by the niceties of fastidious learning. He came rude and almost untutored to the study of Anatomy, and after diligent inspection of the human frame, he opened the pages of Nature's Book, upon her largest scale, where, noting her most striking lineaments with singular adroitness, he perceived the value of organic facts, and commenced the grand design of his Anatomical Collection. Such self-taught and first-rate observers see all natural things with a fresh eye, and although occasionally depicted before, yet another Portrait by a great Master never fails to exhibit some new, striking, or desirable incident.

By granting that MR. HUNTER was deficient in literature and science, I do not mean to infer (as a necessary consequence) the increased freedom or greater vigour of his intellectual abilities; nor shall I attempt to disparage the fertilizing tillage of a classical and mathematical education. The brightest natural talents are capable of being clarified and strengthened by scholastic exercises; it is only the feeble and puny whose capacities are oppressed, cramped, or rendered impotent by the routine of instruction.

MR. HUNTER'S mind was too sturdy to receive any inclinations but those which it yielded to demonstrable evidence; it was too manly for trifles; and it's elasticity would have recoiled from the arbitrary

pressure of any degree of artificial education.

Had Mr. Hunter been conversant with the elements of European languages, he would have gained a better vocabulary to supply emblems for his fine thoughts, and he would have been enabled to express his novel observations with more clearness; — while the discipline of reading would have given him the vivid ideas, the apt descriptions, and the exact reports of Scientific and Learned Men of all Ages and Nations. I therefore deeply lament this deficiency, and impute to it the scantiness of his writings, and all the obscurities which occur in his printed works. But if the living Fountain of his Genius was obstructed in one direction, it overflowed in

another; and to that superabundance I shall now solicit your indulgent attention.

The station of high rank, and the desert which claims public distinction in our Profession, can only attach to few persons,—while the pretension to judicial authority in the execution of our offices, and to the duties of a final Referee, involve responsibilities of the highest order.

Persons who seek to hold the public confidence as Arbiters on Questions of Life and Death, should be well provided with superior knowledge, with undoubted learning in their vocation, and with an abundance of well-digested experience. The eyes of the world are continually directed upon the Heads of every Profession; and unless those who assume that conspicuous

station in our Art surpass the average rate of their Brotherhood, the repute of our Faculty must fall under the suspicion of neither demanding superior Talents, nor of being established on Science or Learning.

It is to Mr. Hunter's pre-eminence as a public Character, and to his lavish self-devotion in honouring, amending, and exalting his profession, that we are bound to respect his name and to eulogize his merits. If, in this feeble effort to pourtray his public features, I should be led into remarks upon the proper qualities of our Directors and Leaders, I mean no reflection against the popular Men of this age. We can boast of Rulers and Elders in this College, whose profound experience, sagacity, and

talents are not surpassed in any kindred Institution.

Mr. Hunter became the High Chancellor of the Healing Art by acclamation; he owed little to patronage, and nothing to presumption. He neither pillaged nor borrowed from other Men's works. He was not forced into notice by any family confederacy; nor did he ever employ his attractive researches to captivate vulgar wonder. In his riper years, and when the abstract acquisitions of his study had become blended with copious experience, he was appealed to equally by Physicians and by Surgeons, as the final Judge upon all unsettled questions in Pathology. His moral pride, his honour, and his justice, made him look with contempt on the un-

worthy Arts, by which hasty and greedy men advance their fortunes; he waited the tide of good opinion with entire confidence in the timely and just reward of his merits; and even in the full matureness of experienced wisdom, he dispensed his decisions with unabated anxiety and painful solicitude.

Such Luminaries in the murky atmosphere of a gainful Profession, whose humble glory is to do good, are like the Lamps of Heaven; they cheer and enlighten us through those dark and fearful duties, which touch the springs of human life.

To those who are ambitious, or who are eager and rapacious for a lucrative reputation, the life and conduct of Mr. Hunter

may prove an useful lesson; and it may shame the future undeserving usurpers of Medical Authority.

A dignified sense of gentlemanly honour and integrity, and a conscientious self-approval, are among the most precious possessions of this life;—They keep awake the desire to be respected, and continue to enliven a disposition to do good, even under the chilling indifference of wintry age;—They are the solace of retirement, and gratify the heart, when common enjoyments cease;—and, if combined with the upright performance of public duties, they open a prospect for posthumous fame, "a "hope of being well spoken of upon Earth "by those who are just, and of the family "of Virtue."

The pure foundations of Mr. Hunter's celebrity were, disinterested love of his profession, assiduity in natural researches for humanity's sake, and a laudable wish to gain the applause of his most enlightened Brethren. He never betrayed any impatience to be rich; and as the rewards for his professional exertions accrued, he considered them as a deposit on behalf of the public weal. Such a Man deserves our admiration, and the gratitude of his Country. His honourable, fair, and well-timed advances to the summit of the Healing Art, are most exemplary, and they show the possible attainments of worthy enterprise, while his successes exhibit as much renown as any healthy Mind can desire. Exalted station in our Faculty

imposes responsibilities of a much severer kind than those which attach to ordinary Practitioners. Our Referees are the lawful Magistrates of Health, they should be well acquainted with the Statutes of life and death, and they are bound to observe an undeviating strictness and liberality in the exercise of that high Power.

Our civil members in Surgery have to seek support from the various classes of Society; during the stage of Youth their proper occupation is among our less dangerous ministrations, and less responsible cares.—As experience, skill, and knowledge advance, they are proportionally entitled to more confidence and to higher rewards; and when distinguished Individuals are selected to hold a daily unchecked assize

upon human life, their duties appear to be almost superhuman.

Whenever the Junior members of our Faculty are unavoidably entrusted with hazardous charges, or if serious doubts occur, they should freely appeal to the co-operating sanction of their Brethren, and should candidly submit their embarrassments to Men of superior experience;— but should such conduct ever lead to worldly circumvention, the Curses of violated humanity will secretly pursue and haunt the odious aggressor.

Unless the conferences among ourselves are free from the disgusting artifices of a gainful trade, and unless our principal Exemplars are far above the suspicion of mercenary greediness, we cannot expect

our sacred calling to obtain implicit confidence, or that the several gradations among our Members shall be respected as Men of honour,—as Gentlemen exercising a humane profession for nobler rewards than the humiliating pittance due to personal service.

Under the authority of municipal regulations granted to our Colleges and Corporate Bodies, we stand before the Public the legitimate Guardians of Health, the Ministers of Medical justice, appointed to abate or cure the bodily afflictions of our fellow Beings, and to use our best endeavours to extend the span of individual life. It is therefore incumbent on ourselves to make the right awards of professional distinction, and to maintain a

just and generous allotment of the offices which the deserts of science, experience, or skill are entitled to:—The world cannot be persuaded of the sufficiency or of the matured judgment of young persons in cases of perplexing difficulty, neither can they be made to believe in the manual precision of the infirm; and unless the respective duties which require sagacity, and those which call for personal skill, are constantly assigned to proper individuals, we cannot be exempt from many severe imputations.

The hallowed duties of our Art ought to elevate our Minds far above worldly temptation, and urge us to be scrupulously exact in all the affairs of moral justice;—for, if those sentiments do not pervade our

whole conduct, we shall not escape being classed with those violent adventurers who rashly tamper with human life, under no better authority than a desperate assurance.

According to my humble judgment, the institution of this Discourse will tend to encourage the study of general Anatomy, and to increase the number of Physiological Practitioners; by which means the Members of our College will be gradually estranged from the Sect of Empirics,—that Sect whose circumscribed notions of Medicine exclude all liberal and scientific pursuits, and leave our Faculty no better source for instruction than the blind adventures of a chance-medley experience,—a Sect so closely resembling ignorant quacks,

that it needs only the addition of sordid imposture to complete the alliance. Unfortunately, however, the assumptions of the Empirics are suited to Men of scanty knowledge, and to those who consider it the first duty in their profession to get wealth.

That persons who daily wrestle with Nature, to rescue sufferers from the grasp of Death, should ever be addicted to vile and avaricious practices,—when the security of a good name, the repose of self-approval, and the blessings of all, are to be given up in exchange,—can only be explained by a lamentable allowance for folly, and by an admission of our short-sighted views of good and evil.

The noble conduct of Mr. Hunter

affords an heroic example of disinterestedness; and, although it may be doubtful whether his ethics would be proper for the narrow prudence of ordinary Men, yet as a public Man, as a rare contributor to the advancement of a Science whose benefits are not to be measured by the rules of vulgar œconomy, he claims our unqualified applause. Proofs of a singular exemption from selfish vices, and of an enthusiastic devotion to the deepest interests of humanity, may be gathered from his testamentary bequest. During a long and faithful performance of professional duties, he had consecrated his daily accessions of Money to the enlargement of his fine Collection,—that glorious Receptacle for Medical Science. He was a genuine Cosmopolite.

His public feeling adopted Mankind for his dearest Kindred, and in the contemplation of their good, he abandoned the pecuniary interests of himself and family.

As a final Referee among his Brethren, no Man surpassed him in candour or in good faith, and his generous example forms a precedent for all our future Dignitaries.

The establishment of an Anatomical Treasury in this College may at some future time become the medium for apportioning the merits of it's Members, by exciting a competition in these important researches of Natural History; and I trust it will create a moral influence over public opinion; so that the claims of Science, of Worth, and Sagacity, may be better protected against the invasions of cunning

Pretenders. In another Century, it will probably be accounted as great a disgrace among our Members, to be deficient in the knowledge of Comparative Anatomy, as it is at this time for them to be ignorant of Human Anatomy: —

HONOURED MASTER,

I HAVE now presented my Garland to the Memory of my Friend, to the Benefactor of our Race, to the chief Ornament of this College; and if my feeble pleading in behalf of a favourite study should help to animate others, my reward will be complete, — while the yearly exertions of my Successors in this office must increase

our Reverence for that Power which clothes with inimitable beauty the Flowers of the Wilderness, and watches over the Life of the defenceless Sparrow.

THE END.

Printed by A. and R. Spottiswoode,
Printers-Street, London.